



DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

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Water quality project set for Tchefuncte River area

BATON ROUGE -- The Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality is conducting a water quality project along the Tchefuncte River and its tributaries. The project is part of an effort to inventory all wastewater discharges in the Lake Pontchartrain Basin.

Staff from DEQ will be going throughout the basin to inspect area businesses for water discharges. The department has conducted inventories in other watersheds and has found many discharges are unpermitted. These discharges can lead to pollution in the state's waters. This project is an effort to gather discharge data to use when issuing future water discharge permits, to get non-permitted facilities into compliance with environmental regulations and to have complete information on all discharge points in the area.

For this project, DEQ has added workshops to assist businesses with filling out permit applications for sanitary wastewater permits. Staff members from DEQ and the Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation are scheduled to be on hand on Feb. 17 and Feb. 26 to provide assistance. There are two sessions on each day, with first scheduled at 3 p.m. and the second at 6 p.m. The workshops will take place at the St. Tammany Council Chambers, 21490 Koop Dr., in Mandeville.

"By the time we finish this watershed we will have much better knowledge about pollution sources, how to police these sources and how to permit them as well," said Chris Piehler, DEQ's project manager. "The goal is to get people into compliance so we can better protect human health and the environment. We're not out here to issue a bunch of fines and enforcement actions. That's why it's important to have the Small Business Assistance group, the Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation and others involved. We're pooling our resources in an effort to improve the state's environment, which has many positives over the long haul."

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